

Early November 1962

New See?

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Luncheon with American Ambassador, David K. E. Bruce.

All private discussion. No quotation or attribution.

Bruce did not add much to the sequence of Cuba events, over what he told the American correspondents last week. The principal reasons for lack of additional consultation with the British government were time and the necessity to preserve security. Bruce feels, however, that in this sort of matter in which the vital interests of one partner are at stake it is unrealistic to expect equal consultation. That is, France could not allow Britain or the United States to determine its future in Algeria; Britain could not allow U.S. intervention in the affairs of Southern Rhodesia; and Britain could not expect a primary role in determining the course on Cuba. Actually, despite de Gaulle's rather formal statement, Bruce thinks that he was not displeased by the lack of consultation and rather expected it.

In Bruce's opinion it is very important for the United States to refrain from boasting about the accomplishment on Cuba. So far as he knows the change of Soviet mind was actually brought about by the threat of military ~~bombing~~ which was very close over the weekend.

Although we ought to refrain from picking up the line that Khrushchev is the best Prime Minister we have -- this is a favourite tactic to extort concessions from the West -- there is now a considerable possibility of negotiation on such things as a nuclear test ban. Kennedy appears to be making a earnest effort. McCloy apparently will have a big hand in any new pitch.

Before we start, however, it is very important for Britain and the United States to make sure that their own policies are in line. This is one area in which, Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union really do control destiny. It is highly likely that the French would go along with any decision reached, although the Chinese are more problematical. We and the British have stood together on this, but for one point last spring in which it appeared that the British might give way on verification. They subsequently have decided that this is more important.

For this reason, a conference between Macmillan and Kennedy might be a good thing. Macmillan has certainly gotten over his effort to act as a broker with the Russians, and there is no doubt whatever of his basic solidity on these points.

Bruce is not worried about the amount of anti-American feeling

in England. A great deal of it is deliberately stirred up by the Communists who use the "hands-off Cuba" committees as fronts. Some of it also stems from lost empire and a quite understandable wish to remind the United States that it did not support Britain at the time of Suez.

Bruce admires Macmillan's political skill, although he does not always agree on policy. Gaitskell he thinks, has badly injured his chances for another election by his stand on the Common Market. This stand is highly emotional, and the vehemence of it is curious tactics after Gaitskell initially did not seem to feel very strongly on the issue. Gaitskell has shown a great deal of courage in the past against the unilateralists and other challengers to his policy; but he now must rely on some very strange allies indeed. Bruce foresees the possibility of an eventual split in the Labour Party, with the right wing merging with the Liberals who do have some dynamic, and the left wing become a sort of conservative Communist element.

A few people in the party such as Michael Foot are "too radical" even for the Communists. They are not Communist party members, but they always end up doing the work of the party, and they are vehemently anti-U.S. in their general outlook. Bruce has agreed to talk to the Labour Party left wing at a dinner in December and looks forward to a vigorous discussion.

There would be very little point, in Bruce's judgment, in an American effort to repair relations with France by offering concessions on nuclear weapons or submarines. Nevertheless, he is somewhat concerned about the deterioration of relations and thinks that in other fields we ought to try to improve matters.

Robert H. Estabrook.

P.S. For office information, apparently there was a little State Department jockeying last week over the release in London of the Cuba photographs. We had a story during the week speaking about the "errant" press officer in London. This infuriated people in the embassy here. Bill Clark, the public information officer, swears to me that he got clearance from Washington and had Bruce's approval for release of the photographs. This had become imperative in local circumstances

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because of the initially sceptical British press reaction. Apparently what happened is that some sleepy-head in the Pentagon did approve the release, but that this was then made an issue by his superiors. The person who actually made the request, I am told, is the courier who actually brought the pictures to London in the first place.

P.S. Points Bruce made which I forgot to include: George Brown, Deputy Leader of the Labour party, told Bruce that Gaitskell had deliberately reneged on his word in his Brighton speech. Gaitskell had indicated that he would follow the line adopted by the Labour Party executive keeping the door open to the Common Market. But the speech Gaitskell actually delivered went back to Gaitskell's own position before the executive had considered the matter and was very much stronger in opposition. Brown was greatly dismayed.

Bruce thinks very highly of Brown and laments the trouble he is in trying to keep his job in the Labour Party. Brown was a fool to take the retainer from the Daily Mirror (\$2000) as an industrial adviser. Nevertheless, Brown is an honest man. The fault is with the system which makes members of parliament dependent upon outside subsidy.

Although Bruce does not agree with some charges that there is a "conspiracy" in the British press to present an anti-American viewpoint, he was appalled by the initial reaction on Cuba in such papers as the Daily Telegraph and The Times. There is substantial infiltration of the press by known Communists or Communist sympathisers, and some instances these people exert influence. This is not to over-simplify the reaction, which certainly was not Communist inspired in the basic sense of shock and non-participation.